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sirable that there should be agreement between civil service and library authorities with regard to the application of civil service principles to library administration, and particularly agreement upon the following questions?

(1) Should not civil service principles be applied to the selection of civil service officials, especially examiners, and if not, why not? Some of the opposition to the extension of civil service among libraries arises from the fact that some civil service commissioners are simply political appointees and some from the fact that general examiners are not only unable to give any but general examinations, but are sometimes unable even to recognize this limitation. If there are any reasons why civil service officials should be exempt from the rules governing other public officials they should be made known.

(2) Should not the service of different civil service commissions be coördinated and examinations standardized? There is much distrust of civil service administration due to the failure of civil authorities to agree among themselves as to the proper classification of the service and the proper standards of examination. This lack of mutual confidence among civil service authorities begets lack of confidence among those whom it is their desire to serve. There can be little hope of greater respect for the decisions of civil service officials until they have greater respect for their own decisions.

(3) Should not civil service commissions coöperate with other professional

bodies in the elevation and maintenance of professional standards? There may well be lack of confidence in the local civil service examiner on the part of the librarian or other expert, and the local examiner may in turn distrust the local librarian, but between state and national organizations representing civil service authorities on the one hand and library authorities on the other there should be coöperation, and, indeed, must be if substantial progress is to be made.

(4) Ought we not to recognize the impossibility of always securing the best candidates through formal examinations? The best that such an examination can do, even when personality and experience are carefully rated, is to eliminate the least capable; it must be left to the appointing officer to determine who of those certified is best fitted for a particular position.

I hope that the time will come when there may be agreement between the National Assembly of Civil Service Commissions and the American Library Association with regard to these and all other points in which civil service and library authorities have a common interest.

In the meantime we can only seek for the improvement of civil service conditions in those few states in which civil service has already been extended to libraries, and endeavor to organize library civil service or provide for the certification of librarians in the numerous states in which there has been no standardization of the service either by civil service or library authorities.

THE STATE AS A UNIT FOR LIBRARY EXTENSION

By MINNIE W. LEATHERMAN, *Secretary North Carolina Library Commission*

While I believe firmly that state supervision, state direction, and state encouragement are absolutely essential, I do not think that state centralization precludes other forms or lesser units for library extension. Hence, I certainly am not ad-

vocating the state as the best and only unit for library extension, but as the greater unit which includes and necessitates the county, the township, or the district, as the case may be.

It cannot be claimed that library com-

missions or other state agencies have been entirely responsible for the remarkable library development that has taken place in the United States in recent years, but even a brief review of the work of the several commissions shows what an important and necessary part they have played in this development. A comparison of library conditions twenty or twenty-five years ago in New York, Minnesota, Indiana, Wisconsin, to mention only a few, with conditions in those same states at the present time, demonstrates beyond question that the state itself is the logical head for library extension activities.

In the second place, the larger unit for library extension is advisable, is necessary, to carry on the educational campaign in those states in which the library movement is still in its infancy. Take states like Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina. I mention southern states because I am more familiar with conditions there than in other parts of the country, but conditions would probably be similar in other sections. But take any state which now has no library commission or other state agency engaged in library extension work. An ideal county library law might be placed upon the statute books, but would such a law give library privileges to all the people in every county in the state? Counties having strong public libraries would probably take advantage of the law and establish some kind of county library extension, because the public library would be the agency which would take the initiative, carry on the educational campaign, and finally secure the needed appropriation or tax. But what would happen in those counties which have no good public library within their borders? And there are many such counties. What agency would take the initiative if the state were entirely eliminated? In North Carolina, for instance, there are 45 counties in which the largest town has less than 2,000 people and 11 counties in which the largest town has less than 500 population. It is evident that there are no large public libraries in those counties,

but that, you say, is the best argument for the county library—that it is in such places that county libraries are most needed. It is, provided there is a state agency to promote the establishment of such libraries.

Would it be possible for you to suppose for a moment that you had never been in a public library, that you had never heard of public ownership and distribution of books, and probably that you had never read a half dozen books in your life? Would you or anyone else under similar circumstances be likely to vote a tax for a county library? If, however, the state sent traveling libraries throughout the county for several years, lent encouragement and assistance in the establishment of two or three small public libraries, and in other ways carried on an educational campaign, teaching the value of books, we believe the county library could and should eventually be established.

In the third place, the state exercises a very important function in promoting helpful coördination and coöperation between the several county or township library systems, the public library and the school and college library as well as in rendering direct assistance. Unnecessary duplication of work is minimized and efficiency increased when there is close coöperation with a state agency. Moreover, the state unit in collecting and distributing information and statistics renders a service which could not be as well done by a smaller unit.

And, finally, there is a certain dignity, influence and authority, which seem to be inherent in a state office. People in every county and in every section respect the function of the state.

Inasmuch as reports show that library commissions and other state agencies have been most successful in promoting the establishment of libraries, and in increasing library efficiency even though they have not brought about a library millennium; inasmuch as the state agency is necessary for carrying on the library campaign in

those states, counties and sections where the library movement is still in a primitive state of development, and inasmuch as the state is the best unit for collecting and distributing information and statistics and for securing proper coördination and coöperation of all library activities, we claim, not that the state is the best and only unit for library extension, but that the best library system like the best school system is one in which the state, the county, and the township are closely coördinated.

The time may come when it will no longer be necessary for the state to promote new libraries or to circulate travel-

ing libraries, but of one thing I am assured, it will be a long time before it comes in the South, but to whatever degree of development library extension activities may attain, there will always be need, as has been pointed out by Mr. Wynkoop, of a central agency to bring and to hold all these library activities into a working system, to serve as headquarters for information and suggestion, to prevent unnecessary duplication, to maintain standards and professional schools where such standards may be realized, and in general to provide such coördination and coöperation as are ever needed for the best economy and efficiency.

THE COUNTY AS A UNIT FOR LIBRARY EXTENSION

BY HARRIET C. LONG, *Librarian, Brumback Library, Van Wert, O.*

The best unit for library extension is unquestionably that unit which most nearly fulfills that ideal of service embodied in our familiar A. L. A. slogan—"The best reading, for the largest number, at the least cost." Let us apply this ideal to the county library system, and see how nearly this method of library extension approaches our recognized ideal.

To provide the "best reading" for a people scattered over town and countryside, is no easy matter. One of the first essentials to providing the best reading for any people is familiarity with the people. We must live among them, sharing their interests and enthusiasms and coming in touch with their daily life. If we adopt the county as the unit over which our library service is to spread, we find definitely organized work in a variety of county-wide movements. These organizations offer a splendid opportunity for coöperation, and for becoming acquainted with people. Visits from the county librarian result in mutual acquaintanceship. The librarian is able to act as publicity agent for the library, as well as to find out

more of the people's interests. The people, knowing the librarian, feel a more definite share in the library. The custodian at each branch receives inspiration from the visit, and feels more really a part of library work, and the responsibilities it entails. All these things that tend to a closer relation between branch or station and the central library are a vital factor in "bringing to the people the books that belong to them," for which the county is a convenient and practical unit.

But mere acquaintanceship with people will not of itself result in the best reading. The librarian must, as we know, be familiar with books—with the contents of books and the making of books as well as their purchase. It requires technique, too, to make the books available to the people, and to make the best use of books. Therefore, a trained librarian, one who possesses a liberal education as well as actual library training should be at the head of the library which hopes to provide the best reading for any people. We are told that the average county contains but 18,000 people, and that probably more than half